

Kansas PRIDE Review



2003

Building Better Communities



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Dear Pride Members and Friends,

A Big thanks and congratulations to all the PRIDE participants which were involved in another successful year of the PRIDE program that has benefited your communities. Your visions, planning and personal involvement have once again proven the local leadership and involvement is an invaluable service to the communities and state in which you reside.

The year of 2003 Pride had 66 communities enrolled in the program throughout the state of Kansas. These 66 PRIDE communities amassed a total of over 1,571 projects and an estimated 50,000 volunteer hours to provide leadership and projects completed. It would be impossible to put a monetary value on the positive impact given to this years PRIDE program. With that being said, 50,000 hours of efforts contributed to the projects, at minimum wage would be valued at over \$250,000 dollars!

During this year out of the communities involved 30 monetary awards were presented to 15 Communities of Excellence along with 15 Star Awards. The funding for the 2003 awards was provided by contributions from PRIDES's private corporate sponsors. In addition to these awards a total of 8 youth awards were presented, 3 of those being Leadership Awards and 5 Community Service Awards.

The PRIDE Program now enters its 34th year of aiding communities involved in this program to set new plans and goals to improve the communities for which you have already given valuable time and service. Along with your participation and the PRIDE program many new projects and goals can be accomplished.

As a proud PRIDE sponsor and on behalf of the other 25 corporate sponsors, I would personally like to thank the co-administrating entities, the Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing and K-State Research & Extension, for providing their staff and support in making the PRIDE program successful. I would also like to thank the 66 PRIDE communities and their volunteers for the dedication you have given to your communities.

On behalf of my company, Pioneer Communications, thank you for your involvement in the PRIDE program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Stan Rice'.

2003 Board Chairman
Kansas PRIDE, Inc.

Board of Directors

Members of the 2002-2003 Kansas PRIDE, Inc. Board of Directors include representatives of sponsoring corporations and organizations, PRIDE community representatives, and the directors of the two administering organizations of PRIDE: K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce. The mission of the Board of Directors is to provide overall leadership and raise funds for recognition of outstanding community achievement through the Kansas PRIDE Program.

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Kansas PRIDE Program

The Kansas PRIDE program is a citizen-based approach to improve the quality of life in Kansas communities. Founded on the belief that the best solutions for community improvement must come from the community itself, the PRIDE program is not a “top-down” organization. Communities identify areas in which they want to improve, and PRIDE helps them to get there. The PRIDE program offers a network of ideas and support along with the tools and resources needed to move a community toward its desired goals. PRIDE also offers statewide publicity and recognition for communities that successfully achieve their goals.

The Kansas PRIDE program is co-administered through the Kansas Department of Commerce and K-State Research and Extension. Kansas PRIDE Inc., a non-profit partnership of private-sector companies and associations, is the third collaborative partner. Kansas PRIDE Inc. provides support for PRIDE community recognition. Through this approach, the Kansas PRIDE program is able to effectively deliver services and resources to PRIDE communities.

Benefits of Participating in PRIDE

- ◆ Increased citizen involvement
- ◆ Elevated community spirit
- ◆ Expanded leadership opportunities
- ◆ Assessment of needs and opportunities
- ◆ Identification and utilization of resources
- ◆ Creation of a shared vision
- ◆ Development of community partnerships
- ◆ Recognition for community improvement efforts
- ◆ Networking with other communities
- ◆ Sustainable community development

Youth Recognition Awards

Developing a healthy community requires the involvement and efforts of all members of the community. The Kansas PRIDE program recognizes the outstanding efforts of youth involved in community improvement through the PRIDE Youth Recognition Awards. This year Kansas PRIDE has accepted nominations in two award categories: the **PRIDE Community Service Award** and the **PRIDE Youth Leadership Award**.

The Community Service Award recognizes individuals for outstanding commitment, dedication, and service to a community through volunteerism.

The Youth Leadership Award recognizes youth that have demonstrated leadership skills through addressing a community issue; proposed a new idea and organized teams or efforts to implement it; helped to resolve community conflict; or have inspired others to community service.



Argonia Youth

PRIDE Youth Community Service Award Recipients

Danielle Lloyd (Fort Scott) An eighth grade student at Fort Scott Middle School, Danielle is an active participant in PRIDE. During her seventh and eighth grade, Danielle kept track of more than 500 students and their involvement in the Middle School PRIDE program. Her commitment to service shines as she jumps at the opportunity to help others. She has been involved in more than 40 different projects, including baby-sitting, bloodmobile, cleanup projects, fund-raisers, soup line, and community improvement projects. Danielle does it all with enthusiasm, a caring demeanor, and great determination. Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize Danielle Lloyd for her outstanding community service!

Kody Pounds (Glasco) When Kody planted a garden in Glasco, he intended to grow a community. Kody Pounds, an eighth grader from Glasco, received a foundation mini-grant to pay for seeds, fencing, and benches. But the garden soon became much larger than the space reserved for planting on the school playground near the Nicol Home Care Facility. Special parts of Kody's garden project, in addition to meeting a need for fresh vegetables for the Nicol Home, were interviewing senior citizens on garden practices in earlier times, encouraging a special nutrition series for teens in the school, and using the garden itself as a growing laboratory for science classes. Kody linked his project into the school curriculum in science, health, and history, making it a part of the school program grades K-12! In addition to pulling weeds, Kody truly pulled together a service project that linked the community. Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize Kody Pounds for his outstanding service!

Katrina Ostmeyer (Grinnell) Katrina will tell you that service to the community is not something that you do when you get around to it; it is a way of life. Katrina has been integral to getting things done in the community. She is highly involved in church, school and community life in Grinnell, and it is not uncommon for her to give several hours a week to community service. Katrina is a member of the National Honor Society, 4-H, PRIDE, and the Summer Reading Program. She has painted the town, worked on signage projects, and assisted in nearly every project and initiative possible. She is the "go-to person" for help in the community because of her contagious positive attitude, belief in others, and because of her ability to get things done! Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize Katrina Ostmeyer for her outstanding service!

Joel Schneider (Lucas) To successfully operate a volunteer-based community theater, you need someone like Joel. The theater was important to Joel as a youth, so he started his volunteer work when the theater was restored in Lucas. Joel produced a presentation of the theater renovation by community volunteers to be shown before each movie. He also created and maintains a progressive local advertisement and trivia PowerPoint for the Chamber of Commerce to be shown before movies. He volunteers as the projectionist, ticket and concession salesperson, does cleaning and maintenance, and serves as the background coordinator, lighting and sound technician for live events. In 2002 alone, Joel contributed more than 21 days of service at the theater. Joel continues to encourage other area community youth to volunteer their time and services to the theater. Through his concern for the community, and passion for the theater, Joel has earned the Kansas PRIDE community service recognition award!

K.C. Arnold (Park City) K.C. is an eighth grader committed to making a better world. During his junior high years, K.C. has invested himself in helping Park City PRIDE and the community. He has delivered phone directories, prepared survey mailings, tabulated survey results, helped with food drives, assisted at celebrations, cleaned parks, planted flowers, and the list goes on and on. K.C. knows that his contribution to the community makes it a better place for everyone, and his commitment to working for a better community is outstanding. The nomination says it best, “Park City PRIDE nominates K.C. Arnold for the Youth Community Service Award for his willingness to work whenever we call on him - as hard and as long as we need him with a smile on his face and an outstanding attitude.”

PRIDE Youth Leadership Award Recipients

Sara Mettlen (Lucas) Sara Mettlen’s leadership reflects her deep commitment to the Lucas community. As the president of the Lucas Youth Group, Sara works cooperatively with the Lucas PRIDE committee in planning and organizing community improvement activities. She is involved with assisting and supporting fund-raisers, special projects, and events through her church, her school, and in PRIDE. In addition to academics, athletics, theater, and music, Sara served as a reading tutor, was involved with food drives, and made a quilt for a PRIDE fund-raiser. Sara demonstrated her leadership skills this year through coordinating the youth activities at the Lucas Annual Festival and the community youth Christmas Program. Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize the outstanding leadership and commitment to community that Sara has provided to Lucas.

Michael Reichenberger (Mount Hope) Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize the leadership of Michael Reichenberger of Mount Hope. Michael looks for ways to improve his community and then steps forward to make it happen. He endeavored to start a reading program at the Public Library for preschoolers and currently serves as the coordinator for the Mount Hope PRIDE Tree Kids Project. As the coordinator of this project, Michael coordinated teams to raise funds, purchase, and plant trees in the community. Michael led his team to raise nearly \$1,000 and was able to purchase and plant 10 trees. Michael also understands the long-term commitment that leadership takes, and now coordinates the tree care teams to water and care for the trees. We recognize Michael for his commitment to community and for his involvement of others in service to Mount Hope.

Whitney Whitman (Park City) Whitney is one of those people that looks at a situation and asks herself, “How can I make this better?” For everything that Whitney gets involved with, she finds a way to improve it. A long-time girl scout, Whitney is active with recruitment and program expansion for scouting. Whitney took classes in child care, first aid, and program aid, before arranging and supervising day care activities for scout leaders, making it easier for them to attend scouting meetings. She is also involved in the Park City Pride Ring of Clowns. Whitney recruited class members, took sewing classes so she could make costumes, and is now taking classes from a magician to learn magic tricks. In addition to being an honor student and athlete, she is an active member of the Ring of Clowns because in her words. “It’s not just funny faces, it’s helping people. It’s being able to put a smile on a child’s face, brighten their day.” Kansas PRIDE is pleased to recognize the leadership of Whitney Whitman.

STAR Award Recipients

Each year the PRIDE program recognizes outstanding projects that address a community need, a high level of citizen involvement, and that enhance the quality of life in Kansas. To receive the STAR Award, a community must nominate an outstanding project they completed within the current PRIDE year. Award winning nominations are selected based on review by a panel of community development professionals. The following 15 PRIDE communities received the STAR Award in 2003.

Almena – Concerned with the availability of activities for young people in Almena, the Almena PRIDE committee chose a project to improve their city’s parks. PRIDE committee members, the city council, a class from the school, and other volunteers focused their efforts in the park on trimming trees, painting, installation of a disc golf course, and the construction of a nature trail to join the city park with the Bantam Park, downtown. The nature trail is particularly important to keep the community’s children



Lansing July Fourth Celebration

off of highway 383, and to increase usage of both parks. With the helpful sponsorship of New Age Industrial Corporation, Almena was able to acquire the equipment necessary to install the disc golf course. The disc course and walking trail are recreation additions to the park that can be used by community members of all ages. For this work, the Almena PRIDE committee has been awarded a STAR award. Congratulations!

Alton – The need for library expansion and more room for community events led the Alton PRIDE committee to consider the creative renovation of the Alton community building. Plans were created for the new design, and the PRIDE committee began identifying funding sources for the remodeling. A foundation grant and previous PRIDE recognition award funds were utilized for the improvements. Volunteers repaired floors, refinished walls, added insulation, hung new doors, installed a new heating/cooling system, and added closets and storage areas. With the finishing touches of painting and trim work, the space was transformed to look like a new community center! The new space now serves the Alton Library and provides program space for community events including the Summer Reading program, the Annual Chocolate Festival, Monday Fun Day for young explorers, an adult exercise program, and displays at the annual Summer Jubilee.

Argonia – Argonia PRIDE understands the value of appearances. This recognition has driven the PRIDE committee to establish an annual Citywide Cleanup Day. Knowing the importance of strong participation, the committee worked with the local newspaper to publicize the event. PRIDE arranged removal service with the local refuse hauler, but volunteers also helped load their own trash and contributed their personal trucks to the effort. PRIDE also teamed up with the KAY club from the high school to give Salter Park a face-lift on the clean-up day. Youth and adults repaired and painted the playground equipment in the park. The result is a cleaner and sharper community made possible through the coordination of PRIDE, and the investment and participation of the people of Argonia!

Beattie – Beattie PRIDE builds on its heritage and plans for the future. Community surveys indicated the need to improve the look of Beattie Main Street. During the past year, several main street improvements have been implemented. The largest improvement project involved developing and landscaping a community museum. This idea grew during the time their community library was relocating and leaving an empty building on Main Street. Beattie PRIDE secured approval from the City Council for the use of the building as a city museum. PRIDE enlisted a variety of community members to assist with the effort including people to research, collect, and display items in the museum. A patio and sidewalk were constructed beside the museum using bricks donated from a neighboring community. A gazebo with planters and hanging baskets enhances the patio area on Main Street. This project makes a significant impact on the appeal of the downtown and will enhance the community for years to come.

Burns – Through the Burns community's last visioning session hosted by Burns PRIDE, it became apparent that the community needed a larger building to house their growing activity demands of the community. Working with the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, the PRIDE committee and other community leaders obtained a KAN-STEP grant to aid in the construction. In the fall of 2002, the official ground breaking ceremony kicked off the construction. Volunteers from Burns and the surrounding area committed time and materials. The shared work on the building became a catalyst for cooperation as community members invested themselves in this project. The new facility offers beauty, space, and warmth and has already been used for many diverse functions. The realization of Burns vision was only possible through the cooperation of the whole community.

Clearwater – The Clearwater PRIDE committee, recognizing the need for programs and facilities for community fitness and health, undertook the commitment to build a wellness center. Through the establishment of the Clearwater Development Foundation (a 501(C) 3 non-profit) the community was able to put together the expertise, fund-raising, and management structures needed to operate the center. Community businesses donated nearly \$350,000 through the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing Community Service Tax Credit Program. Community volunteers supplemented the contracted work to remodel a downtown building. This two-story facility now boasts fitness program staff to help residents fully utilize the weights, jogging track, cardio equipment, aerobics rooms, and small pool. In addition to the health and life benefits this center offers to Clearwater, this project has revitalized the downtown area and has become a safe place for all ages to congregate while participating in lifestyle improvement programs.



**Melvorn Community Center
Before and After**

Formoso – After recently completing the installation of new water lines, made possible through the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing KAN-STEP grant, it became apparent that the next step was to do something about the inadequate firehouse. Again, through the assistance of a KAN-STEP grant and local volunteers, a new fire station became a reality. A new building large enough to meet the space needs for equipment, office, rest rooms, and a community room with a full kitchen, was erected on a vacant lot. The building of the fire station involved volunteers from age 4 to 80 plus and the donated use of machinery. To enhance the newest addition to Formoso, attractive landscaping and decorative rock were added around the building. Formoso PRIDE appreciates and recognizes all those that contributed to this outstanding effort. The volunteer-driven project demonstrates people can work together and accomplish positive results that are essential to the health, safety, and benefit of the whole community and surrounding area.

Fort Scott – Fort Scott PRIDE sponsored an antique appraisal fair in conjunction with the Fall Festival, held in downtown Fort Scott in October 2002. Five certified antique appraisers were invited to come and appraise community antiques during the day. For a nominal fee, citizens could have their items appraised. Eighty-eight people brought 222 items to be appraised at the fair. Participants enjoyed learning about the history and value of their items. PRIDE members worked at the appraisal fair to help it run smoothly and have been asked to host the activity again in the coming years. Plans include having a quilt appraisal in addition to the antique appraisal. Due to PRIDE's innovative idea, attendance at the fall festival increased, resulting more buyers in a stronger economic impact for the community.

Greeley – It is with great pride that the citizens of Greeley look at the gazebo and trail area behind the historic 1856 Valentin Gerth Log Cabin. When the cabin was moved in 1999, the area behind the cabin and along the Pottawatomie Creek was nothing but fallen limbs, brush, trash, and burn piles. In the past year, local citizens and Greeley PRIDE determined that something needed to be done to clear and reclaim the land. The areas' scenic beauty made it an ideal site for a park-like space that families, friends, and tourists could enjoy. The area now boasts a gazebo and trail that follows the south fork of the river. Rare wildlife can be seen along the trail and in the river - these include the horn-headed chub minnow and the eastern spotted skunk. Today, Greeley welcomes tourists, clubs, organizations, and others to the town, and provides them with a place to gather, picnic, and play. The citizens of Greeley are truly proud of what they have done and can be proud of this STAR project.

Grinnell – Grinnell PRIDE focused its efforts this year on helping the city of Grinnell replace the street Christmas decorations — which were long overdue for replacement. “Christmas in Grinnell” was rekindled through the fund-raising efforts of the community PRIDE organization. Citizens donated all labor and supplies needed for fund-raising events for the acquisition of the new decorations. In addition to the fund-raisers, Grinnell PRIDE also combined annual Christmastime events including caroling in Oakley and Grinnell, Christmas lighting contest, collecting Christmas cards for the art program at the grade school, recycling Christmas trees, and tires for use in making Christmas wreaths. The impacts of these projects are as numerous as they are timeless. Grinnell PRIDE has truly captured the spirit and meaning of the Christmas season through these activities.

Highland – The Highland PRIDE organization decided to host “Prairie Trails Days” to help the Native American Heritage museum attract visitors in order to stay open as a state museum. PRIDE collaborated with the Friends of the Museum, the museum's curator, and Doniphan County Historical Society to make the two-day event a great success. On the first day, more than 350 fourth-through sixth-grade students in Doniphan County enjoyed activities learning about pioneers and Native Americans. The second day was open to the public, with families attending from nearby communities and neighboring states. Approximately 100 individuals were called upon to provide assistance for the event. Volunteers provided services ranging from advertising; food preparation and service; to entertainment, grounds maintenance, and financial needs. The goal of museum promotion and attracting visitors was certainly accomplished in the eyes of the volunteers who were kept very busy for the two-day event.

PRIDE communities position themselves for success through

- an established organization
 - strong networks
 - clear working partnerships
 - an engaged citizenry
 - a plan for improvement
 - a track record of achievement
-



Potwin Community House

Lansing – The City of Lansing, Lansing PRIDE, and Lansing residents came together to hold a 4th of July Celebration. As many as 4,000 to 5,000 people came out to support the city's Fourth of July event. With a large military population and patriotism in full force due to recent events, Lansing wanted to demonstrate its patriotism in the form of a top-notch Fourth of July celebration. Lansing PRIDE helped to coordinate the activities, ticket sales, and event oversight. Activities and events filled the schedule for the day, including a climbing wall and food booths. Children enjoyed various rides and games, while family members sat back and enjoyed the music, food, and wonderful company. As the sun went down, the spectacular fireworks display began. Volunteers organized and directed the fireworks. Residents and guests truly enjoyed the day and have insisted that the magnitude of this celebration continue. Through this community celebration, Lansing PRIDE is building pride in Lansing!

Lucas – The Lucas PRIDE committee has been awarded a STAR Award for hosting, "Yesterday's Tomorrows," an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institute. Lucas is the smallest community to host a Smithsonian Exhibit, and to do so, took a lot of dedication and perseverance. The planning committee was at the center of this project and consisted of citizens, local organizations, and businesses. Fund-raisers such as a wine and hors d'oeuvre evening and a handmade quilt raffle helped to raise the funds to market and advertise the exhibit. The committee also organized speakers and displays to compliment the exhibit. A local festival was held in conjunction with the exhibit, also titled "Yesterday's Tomorrows," and included a hair and style revue, futuristic parade entries, and futuristic music at the barbecue. More than 2,000 people visited the City of Lucas (population 450) during the six-week exhibit. The community's dedication and months of work to host this exhibit certainly paid off in the satisfaction of accomplishing such a major success and the economic impact to the community.

In fiscal year 2002, Kansas PRIDE communities received nearly \$3.5 million in community development block grant funds through the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing.

Melvorn – Several years ago, the citizens of Melvorn came to consensus that the highest priority was a community center. A vacant equipment dealership on Main Street had fortunately become available, and PRIDE purchased the building. The City of Melvorn was awarded a grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing's KAN-STEP Program to provide more than \$500,000 for the remodeling and renovation of the stone building into a community center. Volunteers donated labor and materials to transform the old structure into an impressively remodeled facility with a full stainless steel kitchen, professional meeting rooms, and attractive fitness center. Beyond commitment and enthusiasm, the community joined hands to create a facility for Melvorn and the surrounding area. Since opening, the center has hosted a continuous schedule of events and occasions in the two meeting rooms.

Potwin – The Potwin Community House was built in 1917, but unfortunately, was not updated over the years with air conditioning or for accessibility. The unique architecture of the building led Potwin's City Council to appoint the Community Steering Committee and encourage them to apply for a Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing Community Development Block Grant. While initially unsuccessful, the group persevered, and in 2001 was awarded the funds to fully renovate the building. Community volunteers rolled up their sleeves and began removing all salvageable items from the building and putting them in storage. Bids were awarded to various contractors to perform work on the building that could not be done by volunteer labor. Windows, walls, and floors were refurbished and an elevator was installed; however, once the contractors were finished, volunteers again moved in to paint and finish the project. Volunteers contributed more than 1,600 volunteer hours and the building again became a user-friendly point of civic PRIDE in Potwin.

Community of Excellence Award Recipients

Alton – After the designation of Alton as the birthplace of Russell Stover, founder of Russell Stover Candies, Alton PRIDE decided to initiate a Chocolate Festival. Due to the group's ability to effectively plan and manage the projects they undertake, a success was assured. The celebration attracted people from far and near for games, contests, and an opportunity to come together in the true spirit of community. Although Alton is a small community of only 117 residents, they are not small in the projects they tackle. Alton hosts huge celebrations and community events, and is undaunted by large projects. When visited for the Community of Excellence evaluation, the evaluators commented on the strength of the Alton PRIDE organization, its leadership, and the great work of integration of the community with Alton PRIDE activities. More than just working efficiently, however, Alton PRIDE always seems to have a great time in the process!

Argonia – As an umbrella organization for community planning and improvement, Argonia PRIDE meetings are at the center of community decisions and create many opportunities for collaboration. This 15-year sustained community improvement effort is supported through monthly meetings with the mayor, clear annual goals, and a “can do” attitude. The Argonia annual work plan includes on-going updates on the status of projects with the city government, and careful project evaluation. “Argonia PRIDE has been very effective in securing funding resources through grants, local fund raisers and alumni support” one evaluator noted. This ambitious group has successfully completed several major projects to benefit the community and area. This past year, they continued to challenge themselves with tourism promotion through bus tours, a model rocket club, a river walk and a new recycling building. Youth involvement has been strong throughout PRIDE’s betterment projects, with frequent recognition for volunteers of all ages through an annual Appreciation Banquet.

More than 100 volunteers participated in PRIDE community building workshops in the spring of 2003.

Basehor – Located near Kansas City, the need for planned growth is a priority for all segments of the community. With a five-year plan for the future growth, the Basehor PRIDE group continues to provide the leadership and energy to this very active community. Basehor PRIDE owes its’ success in part to the partnerships with other organizations and groups and the support of the city government. Three PRIDE committees work in cooperation in Basehor; PRIDE Youth; Gold PRIDE (age 55 and older) and the PRIDE committee. Although each group identifies its priorities and initiates projects, they meet regularly and work in unison on major projects, celebrations and activities. Some of the outstanding projects this year include: a leadership development program for high school students with involvement of the teachers; Gold PRIDE’s two \$500 youth scholarships; assisting with the library and school expansion; initiating a community assessment; and frequent volunteer recognition.

Beattie – One outstanding quality noted by the evaluators in this first year PRIDE community is the synergy and positive attitude of PRIDE members. In their first year Beattie PRIDE has cooperated with city crews to implement a community clean up; founded a historical museum; landscaped a downtown park with a recycled brick patio and path; and built and decorated a new gazebo with hanging baskets. In addition, PRIDE is helping to promote economic development efforts to recruit a business to the recently acquired school building. The community presentation to the evaluators included strong documentation materials and demonstrated the strength and careful organization of the program. To quote one evaluator, “We were amazed at this fledgling group that really had it together for their presentation”!

Burns – This dynamic PRIDE program has extended the reach of community involvement far beyond the city limits to include a broad and diverse base of support. Many of the community needs were identified by a PRIDE sponsored visioning session several years ago. Today, through strong leadership, a positive attitude and the ability to get things done, Burns has accomplished many of its priority goals. They recently relocated the Public Library, and have successfully added businesses on their Main Street. This year the citizens of Burns and the surrounding area cooperated to build a community center. After receiving a KAN STEP grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, the community PRIDE committee started coordinating and recruiting volunteer labor. Due to the number of highly skilled and talented people, the community was able to mobilize and construct the building in an amazingly short period of time. It seems that the success of this project only fueled the fire for Burns, as they continue to throw themselves into the work of community improvement, and check the completed goals off their list! Burns is organized, open to new ideas, and active in creating the type of community that people of Burns value.



Beattie Main Street Improvements

Eskridge – Known as the Gateway to the Flint Hills, this newly formed PRIDE community stepped immediately into action. The group began working on city clean up, painting homes, and community welcome signage. They built handicap ramps in the park and hosted events for recruitment and to recognize volunteers. Stepping forward to provide and educate the community on current issues, the PRIDE group hosted a public discussion on methamphetamine awareness. Eskridge PRIDE understands the importance of clear and continuous communication with city government, and hosts monthly meetings with the mayor and city council, chamber of commerce, and other groups and organizations. The organization demonstrated a clear understanding of the community development process with thorough documentation. Evaluators were impressed with the broad volunteer base and youth programs. “Eskridge appears to be able to tap into resources very effectively, [they] are very enthusiastic, and have a lot of energy in their first year as a PRIDE community”, stated an evaluator.

Goff – “For this small town of only 180 people to have done so much is amazing,” stated one evaluator. The list of noteworthy projects is impressive for this community. The PRIDE committee is always looking for ways to improve the community, as is reflected in their work. Goff PRIDE has developed and is continually improving a community exercise center and public library. They have remodeled the fire station meeting area and kitchen, and coordinate city-wide clean up days. PRIDE also hosted the AARP Defensive Driving Class for drivers older than 55, highway beautification work, and fund-raising events including the Walk for Kansas benefit. The community’s most welcome new addition, the community center, utilized a Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing KAN STEP grant. By matching the grant with in-kind labor through local volunteers and area farmers, their dream for a community meeting place became a reality. Goff PRIDE continues to stay focused, active, and is always improving.

PRIDE community citizens tackled more than 1,600 community improvement projects this year.

Greeley – In the past three years, many changes have occurred in Greeley. One of the most notable happenings prior to this time was when a group of concerned citizens decided to enroll in the PRIDE Program. From that day forward, it has been evident that PRIDE can and has made a dramatic difference for citizens through opportunities for working together, cooperation and leadership. As one evaluator noted, “Great support from the community. They come together to Work!” The fact that Greeley PRIDE successfully completes 25-30 projects annually, and is responsive to any emergency that may arise, amazed the evaluators. The PRIDE appreciation banquet hosted 137 people and recognized outstanding volunteer efforts with certificates and applause. Youth are very involved, often identifying community improvement activities relative to young people. A few of Greeley’s outstanding projects were the gazebo, nature trail and sidewalks at Gerth cabin, a courtyard, alumni event, signage and attracting tour buses from both in-state and out-of-state to visit the historic Gerth cabin and community.

Grinnell – A community of long standing in the PRIDE program, this western town of 327 people has utilized all facets of the community to sustain and foster a sense of caring and sharing environment. A contributing factor has been their ongoing commitment to getting people involved in PRIDE. After refocusing the community vision and priorities in 2001, Grinnell has remained on track with their community improvement plans. With 32 projects undertaken during the past year alone, there is something to encourage everyone’s participation. Grinnell PRIDE’s willingness to continually ask the question, “what can we do better?” has led the community to creative programs and solutions to meet community needs. Evaluators noted diversity within the youth PRIDE projects as a wonderful way to develop the future of the community with young people taking the lead. As one evaluator stated, “Development doesn’t always have to be new, retention is sometimes more immediately important.” As volunteers work toward achieving the priorities identified in the vision for Grinnell, they understand that valuing the skills, talents, and abilities of the citizens is in itself an important contribution to developing community.

Highland – With outstanding support from all levels of the community, this ambitious, creative group can always find the ways and means to meet diverse needs of the people in and around Highland. A PRIDE program that fully recognizes the value of the community development process, their focus is directed toward the whole community. For example, youth groups, organizations and college students have undertaken or participated in many of the 58 projects adopted. “There is truly a spirit of pride in this northeastern Kansas community under 1,000, that makes you think it’s a much larger town,” stated one amazed evaluator. Due to the extensive media coverage on PRIDE related activities, information and participation has been expanded. An evaluator was impressed to learn they had become specialized, even in their community clean up, when it was designated “Appliance Clean Up Day”. This broad base of involvement has allowed PRIDE to make an important contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the community and area.

Lakin – “It is obvious that PRIDE’s core group is a strong and moving force in the community. Their ability to interact dynamically with other groups, organizations and institutions is reflected in the partnerships demonstrated in the projects undertaken,” stated evaluators. In this southwestern Kansas community of just over 2,000, Lakin PRIDE has kept a focus on community improvement. Working closely with K-State Research and Extension agents of Kearney County, this PRIDE committee has been quick to adopt new ideas and explore resources that can help move them forward. Lakin PRIDE volunteers to help out with school and city events, and does exceptional work in involving and sustaining youth involvement. Some of the many improvements that PRIDE has accomplished include; downtown landscaping; a Yard of the Month beautification program; a farmer’s market; city entrance beautification; creation of a skate park, picnic area and walking paths; and seasonal programs and events. Lakin recently hosted a public visioning session to reprioritize community goals and is certain to have success as they move forward on their new plan.

Lucas – The citizens of Lucas have seriously considered what they believe is important about living in a small Kansas community, and they have highlighted these values. It is evident through the restored movie theater, where you can take in a movie and popcorn for under five dollars. It is evident in the bright, colorful, and often frivolous yard art displays at the Folk Art Center. And it is evident on a Saturday night when the downtown merchants stay open until 10 p.m. Lucas PRIDE has focused on keeping the qualities of living in a small town alive and well. PRIDE is organized as part of the Lucas Chamber of Commerce and this partnership has been a positive approach for both. The evaluator's comments tell the story, "Dynamite community, blew our socks off!" The strengths were seen in the enthusiasm, structure of the organization, a myriad of projects and the ability to work as a cohesive unit. The evaluators felt the community had many opportunities that larger communities would wish for, such as hosting a Smithsonian Exhibit, a Folk Art Museum and a beautiful recreational lake nearby. Congratulations Lucas!

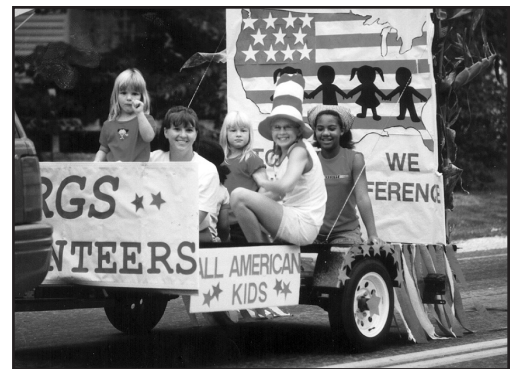
Melvorn – After hosting a Community of Excellence evaluation team two years ago, Melvorn PRIDE learned about the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing KAN STEP Program. With the established network of citizens, and the planning and organization that PRIDE offers, the priority for a community center fell to PRIDE to coordinate. With the blessing of the City, Melvorn PRIDE decided to develop an existing building on the main street into a community center. Area residents teamed together to cooperate on numerous fund-raising efforts, contributions of time, materials and money. The large brick and native stone building, once a farm implement dealership, has been beautifully transformed to meet the diverse needs of the community, and sports meeting space, a state of the art kitchen, and an exercise center. The project, due to PRIDE's aggressive action and the broad base of support, the Center has truly become "the miracle on Main Street"! From their new community building, Melvorn PRIDE continues to plan and implement community improvement projects.

Potwin – What was started 20 years ago, with Potwin's decision to enroll in the PRIDE program, soon became a model program for others to emulate. "They fully understand and apply the development process in all aspects of programming", evaluators noted. The successes have been a monumental asset to the community's viability. "There is heavy emphasis on the entire community being involved - from the special 'Old People's Day' in its 92nd year to many activities that kids are a big part of," stated an impressed evaluator. It is obvious that Potwin is effective in identifying and utilizing resources. An example of this is a recently completed building restoration and enhancement that resulted in a remarkable conversion of an existing facility into a new and fully accessible community center. This project was made possible through the help of volunteers who donated goods, labor and services. PRIDE continues to be aware of the needs and issues of the greater community and works diligently to address them. With a "can do" attitude, this hard-working group of creative thinkers has helped make Potwin a Community of Excellence!

Rossville – Upon arrival in Rossville, the evaluators were awed with the "wonderful enthusiasm and commitment from the community"! Only in their 2nd year with PRIDE, a solid foundation has been established with the tools to move forward. The projects are ambitious with many areas for involvement from the community. The Tall Corn Festival offers entertainment, recreation and economic opportunities for Rossville and the area. The festival is well attended and brings hundreds of people and dollars into town for the summer event. In addition, PRIDE's efforts focused on the swimming pool, city signage, and work on an industrial park project to name a few. Strong partnerships with the city, economic development group, local organizations and institutions demonstrate the effectiveness of working cooperatively for a better Rossville. The results of the soon to be completed community assessment will assist Rossville in identifying priorities and plans for the future. "With leadership and a vision for the future, this community of just over 1,000 will certainly continue to grow and prosper," evaluators noted.

PRIDE communities:

- assess the situation,
 - identify their vision,
 - prioritize their goals,
 - involve the community, and
 - celebrate success!
-



Rossville Parade

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